


Murals brighten Gilroy's walls



GILROY—Gilroy is looking colorful these days as young muralists paint up a storm at Eliot Elementary School and the Gilroy Apartments.

The eight student muralists are part of the Tecolote Corps Project funded by a CETA grant and sponsored by South County Alternatives (The Owl).

The purpose of the project is to motivate low-income and low achievement youth to return to school, prepare for careers and develop good work habits.

The Tortuga Patrol, a professional mural artists' group from Watsonville, is training the students.

The Eliot School mural features a brightly colored block design reading "La Vida Nueva Esta Aqui." Ralph D'Olivera explains the mural's theme as community involvement—"children helping one another." D'Olivera

emphasizes that murals are a particularly public art form causing interaction between the students and the community.

The Gilroy Apartments' mural draws on images from Indian culture. Designs are taken from the ball courts of Monte Alban and the Aztec calendar and painted in rich earth tones.

These first murals were designed by the professional artists to begin the project. As the students advance they will design their own murals.

Student muralists work an average of 25 to 30 hours and are required to attend two hours of career exploration weekly.

Jaime Rosso, a project director, expects that at least 80 percent of the students will be "positively terminated," returning to school or acquiring jobs.

← JUST A TOUCH MORE SUNLIGHT—Nora Madrid, 18, paints the detail work on the Gilroy Apartments' new mural. The mural features images from Indian culture. (Photo by Rachael Wrege)